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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000153

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
INL FOR KEVIN BROWN, ANGELIC YOUNG AND DON STOLLWORTHY
S/CRS
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STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
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TAGS: SNAR KCRM KPKO PGOV PREL ASEC ECON HA
SUBJECT: HAITIAN POLICE PRIORITIES, PROGRAMS, AND PROBLEMS

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 00091

PORT AU PR 00000153 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, reason 1.5(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Director General of the Haitian National Police (HNP) recently discussed with Embassy officials his priorities and constraints in developing the needed police officers for regular police work, additional police presence in Cite Soleil, border control, and adequate staffing of corrections facilities. Corruption issues have surfaced in reference to the management of the prisons, also part of the HNP. The need for development of a land border force is being addressed amid HNP misgivings about MINUSTAH plans for land border control. However, there are no plans to expand the size of the Coast Guard to improve coastline security. End summary.

¶2. (C) On January 9 NAS Director and NAS Senior Program Manager met with Haitian National Police Director General Mario Andresol. Andresol spoke openly on a wide range of topics including the political pressures he is experiencing regarding police deployment, his priorities for the HNP, and the challenges ahead. He spoke extensively about the need for more police in the Port au Prince area, particularly at night. He expressed his frustrations at the political pressure being brought to bear on him to blanket Petionville, a Port au Prince high-rent suburb that is the location of many businesses and frequented by foreigners, with a police officer at every intersection. Petionville is the heart of business activity now and has seen a spike in kidnappings and other crimes starting in late 2007. He also acknowledged that the police do not control the Port au Prince area at night, with those officers assigned to night duty rarely leaving their police stations. His solution would be to designate the majority of the new police cadet class of approximately 650-750 officers (known as the 20th promotion) as a night patrol force, with dedicated vehicles. The force would be separate from the regular police officers assigned to the local police stations. However, he has doubts that he will be able to stand up that force as he wishes.

¶3. (C) Andresol also indicated that he must now begin to

train a border force to staff four major border crossing points as part of MOJ commitments under the MINUSTAH-devised border control plan. He plans a class of approximately 200 cadets dedicated to the border to begin training this spring.

He is seriously considering a separate recruitment for the border force that would recruit directly in the border area. That has the advantage of solving the problem of how to house the new border force where there is no GOH housing presently but simultaneously presents a host of other potential problems, including corruption issues. The DG also expressed his serious misgivings about the current MINUSTAH plan to reinforce four points on the land border with the Dominican Republic. He knows that will push much more of the contraband and smuggling activities into the regions between those points, which are even more isolated and difficult to control. He pointed out that contraband is already heavy through Thomassique and the nearby town of Maissade is well-known as a drug trafficking center. He estimated that at least 1000 officers are needed to effectively control the land border.

¶4. (C) NAS asked specifically about police for Cite Soleil and plans for the HNP Coast Guard (HCG). The DG acknowledged that Cite Soleil needs police but again alluded to the pressures to place the upcoming class in other duties, in spite of the terms of the letter of agreement between the USG and GOH signed on January 22. He stated that there were no plans to expand the HCG at this time as they do not have the necessary equipment to operate effectively (the classic chicken-egg argument regarding personnel and equipment that is also employed re Cite Soleil). Andresol also reported in a separate conversation with Embassy officials that Canada will renovate 18 police sub-stations on the Southern Claw as well as refurbishing the harbors at Les Cayes and Jacmel. That information was subsequently confirmed by MINUSTAH sources. Such renovations will provide needed infrastructure

PORT AU PR 00000153 002.2 OF 002

but will also increase pressure on already limited numbers of police to be deployed more heavily in the outlying areas.

¶5. (SBU) From a different perspective, on January 15 INL DAS McCampbell, the Ambassador and NAS staff met with the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for Public Security. The Minister listed support for the BLTS, the HNP counternarcotics unit, as well as the judicial police (DCPJ) under which BLTS operates, and the HCG as his top priorities.

He also mentioned the border force and the need for reform of the justice sector to match that being undertaken by the police. The Ambassador asked about police for Cite Soleil and the amendment to the USG-GOH letter of agreement (LOA) for Cite Soleil police and security programs. She pointed out that the USG did not want to construct police stations that would not be used. The SecState put forward the now familiar chicken-egg argument about the lack of police stations and barracks impeding police presence in Cite Soleil. In the end, the Minister indicated he supported signing the LOA as soon as possible, once problems with the French translation had been resolved. The signing did occur on January 22.

¶6. (SBU) One bright spot is the rapid progress being made on the INL-NAS funded (\$350,000) anti-money laundering and financial crimes project. US Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) made major progress on reestablishing the independent role of the HNP financial crimes unit (BAFE) during their January 7-11 visit. President Preval met with the team again and remains actively involved in the project's management. At his direction, a new location for the reconstituted BAFE that will accommodate 25 staff has been found in Petionville. The OTA team will return Feb 17 to begin working directly with BAFE on open investigations, including corruption cases. The President thanked the US Government for its support of this program in his speech at the opening of Parliament on January 14 (reftel).

¶7. (C) On January 16 MINUSTAH contacts reported that major corruption problems have emerged at the Direction of Penal Administration (DAP) of the HNP. According to MINUSTAH Police Development officials, MINUSTAH is requesting an audit of the DAP for two main reasons: the disappearance of several large checks from the DAP recently, and the extensive nepotism that is becoming evident in the current corrections class being trained at the Police Academy. That class was not recruited using the normal police procedures and bypassed the testing and background checks normally done. The fate of that group is being decided now, as DG Andresol has indicated he does not wish to deploy them into the prisons, while acknowledging that several hundred corrections officers are desperately needed.

SANDERSON